

**Testimony to the
President's Commission on Excellence in
Special Education**

**California Department
of Education
Committed to
Improving Results**

**Alice D. Parker, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent
Director of Special Education
April 26, 2002**

Quality Assurance for Students with Disabilities in California

**Continuously Improving
Services and Outcomes
for Families**



Remember The Way We Were...

A STATE WITH:

- **More than 1100 LEAs**
- **Serving 640,000 students with disabilities**
- **A monitoring system based on procedural compliance**
- **Decreasing number of staff**
- **No data to answer the question, "How effective is special education in California?"**

Steps to Develop State-wide Consensus

- Partnership committee for Implementation Plan-1998, meets annually
- SIG application funded-1999
- KPI Stakeholder Group convened for Quality Assurance Process-December, 1998, meets 2-3 times per year
- Performance Goals and Indicators Developed and approved by Stakeholder Group-June, 1999
- Process developed and shared with entire state, including training and staff development
- QAP implemented in 1999-00, 00-01, and 01-02
- Focus on key performance indicators pays off!

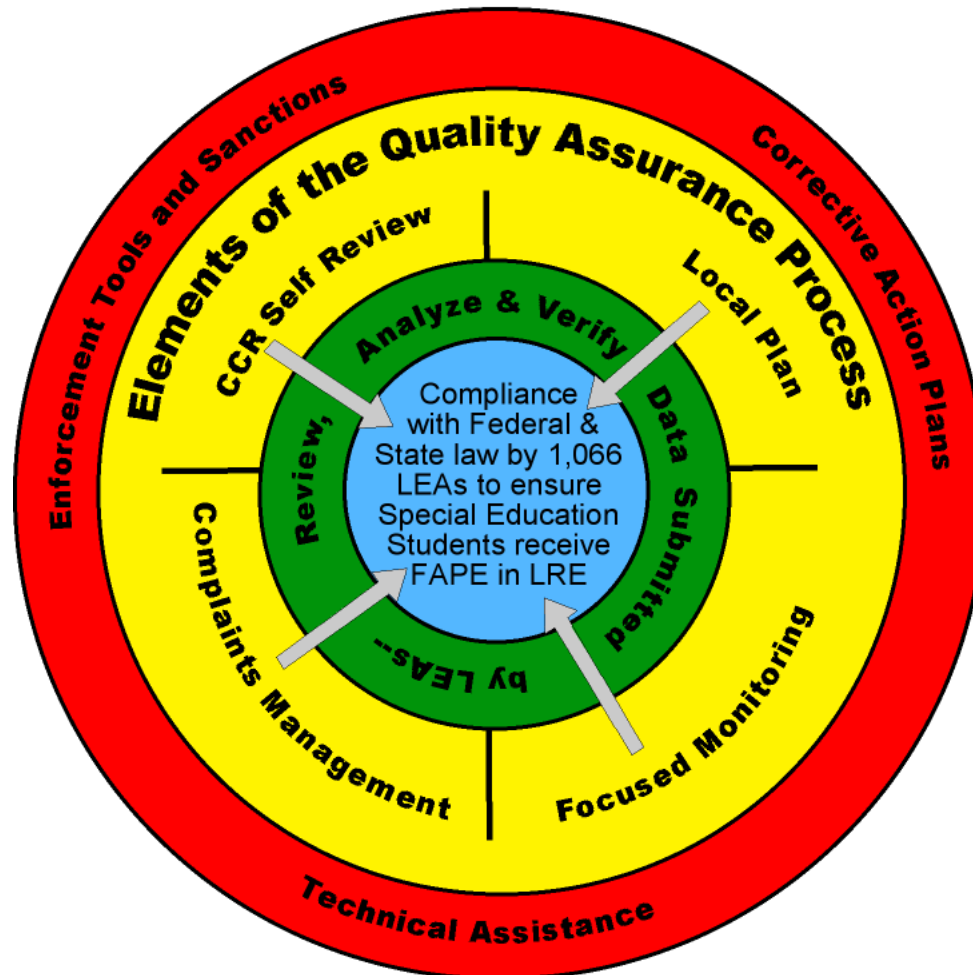
We instituted a number of changes.

- Convened a group of stakeholders
 - established clearer goals and indicators
 - took stock of the data we already had on hand to identify districts most in need
 - reengineered the methods we were employing to work with districts
 - to assess district compliance with procedural guarantees,
 - to assess success in reaching statewide goals, and
 - to provide guidance, training and technical assistance). Lastly, we
- Implemented a new Quality Assurance Process - a process we believed that was
 - data informed,
 - integrated all of our monitoring efforts under one umbrella including
 - local policy and procedure review,
 - complaints/due process,
 - monitoring reviews,
 - review of student level and district data), and
 - focused our technical assistance and enforcement efforts

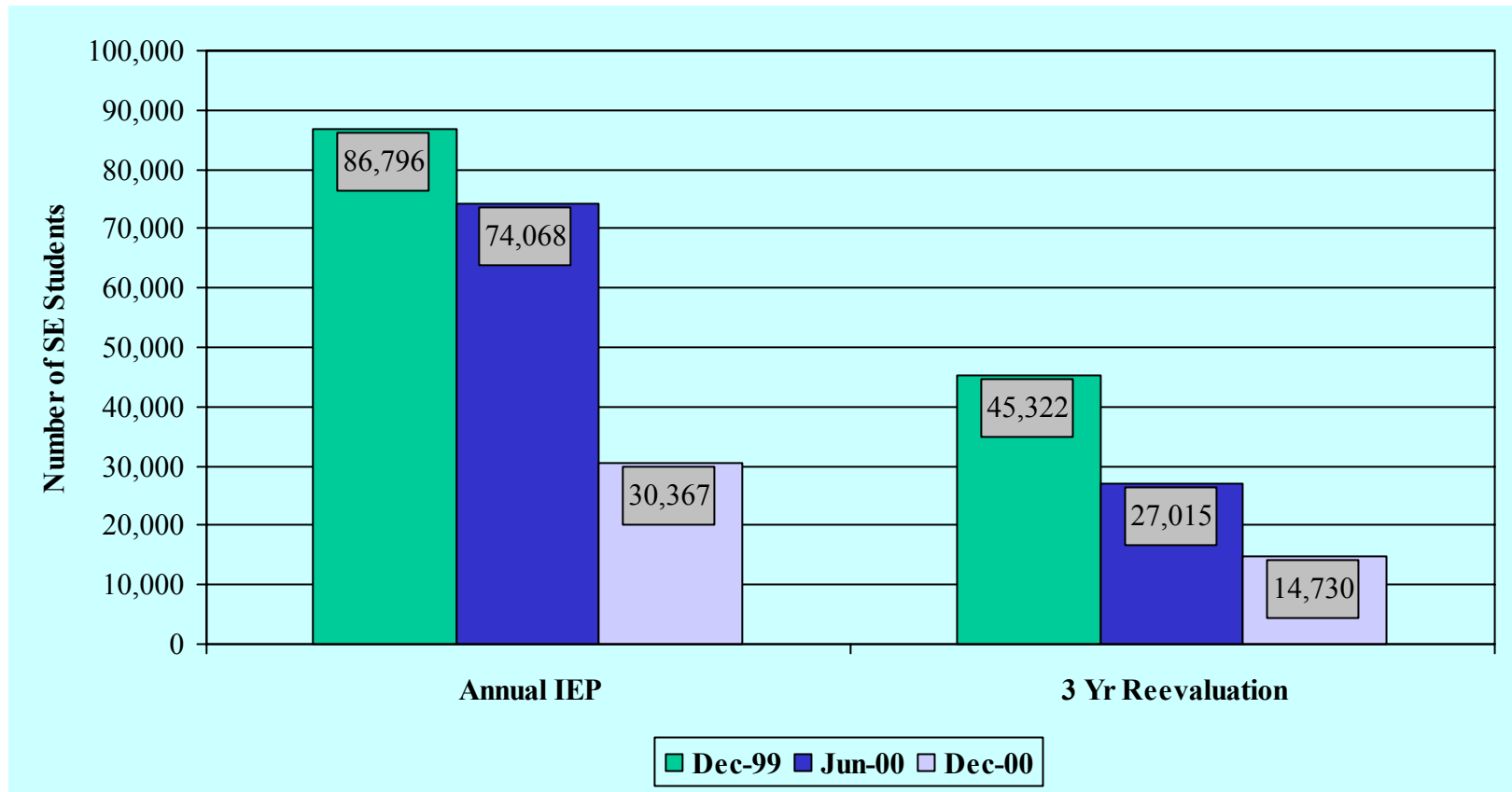
Components of Effective Administrative Supervision (monitoring)

- ✓ 1. Comprehensive Policies & Procedures
- ✓ 2. Data on Process and Results*
- ✓ 3. Training & Technical Assistance (CSPD/SIG)
- ✓ 4. Effective Complaint Management
- ✓ 5. Investigations, Corrective Actions, and Enforcement

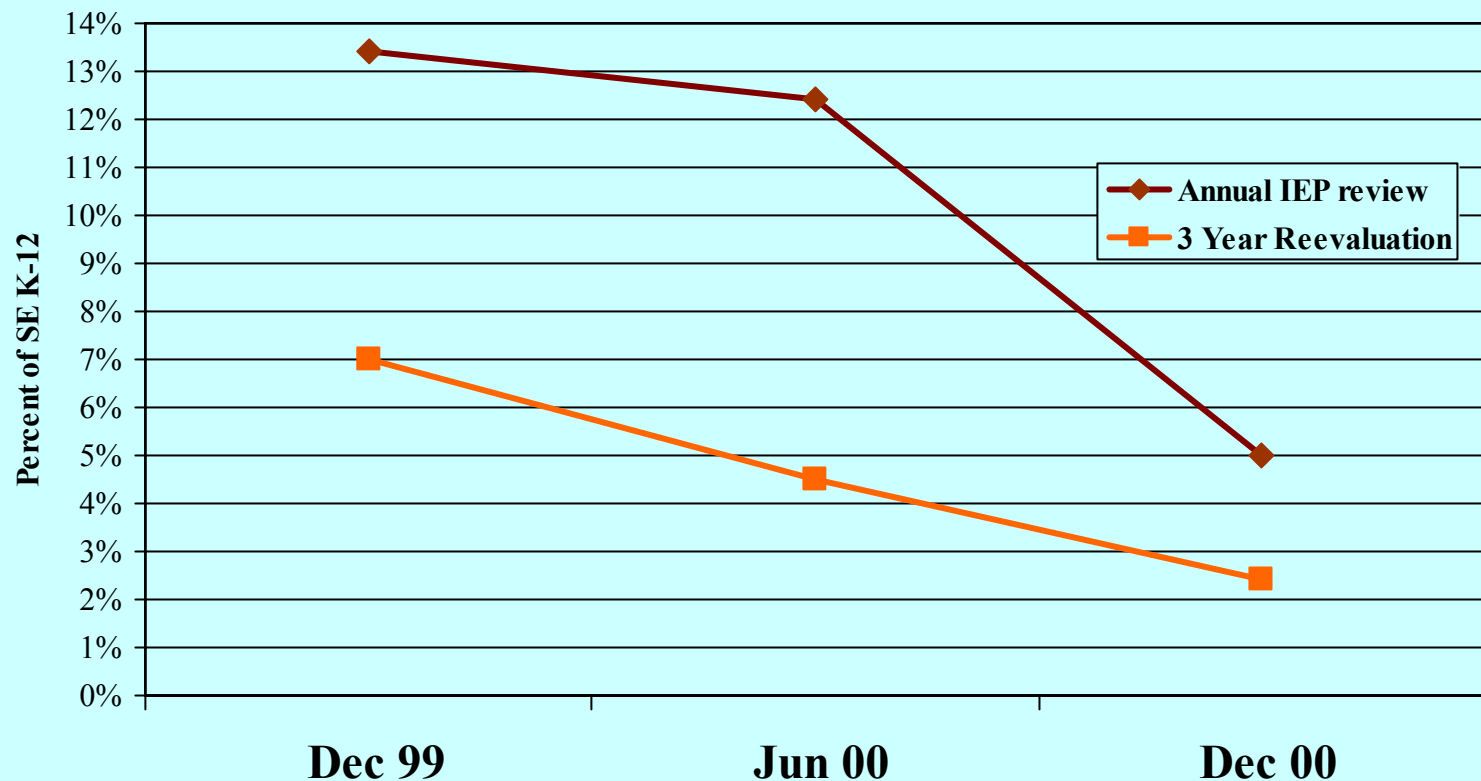
System of Overall Supervision and Monitoring



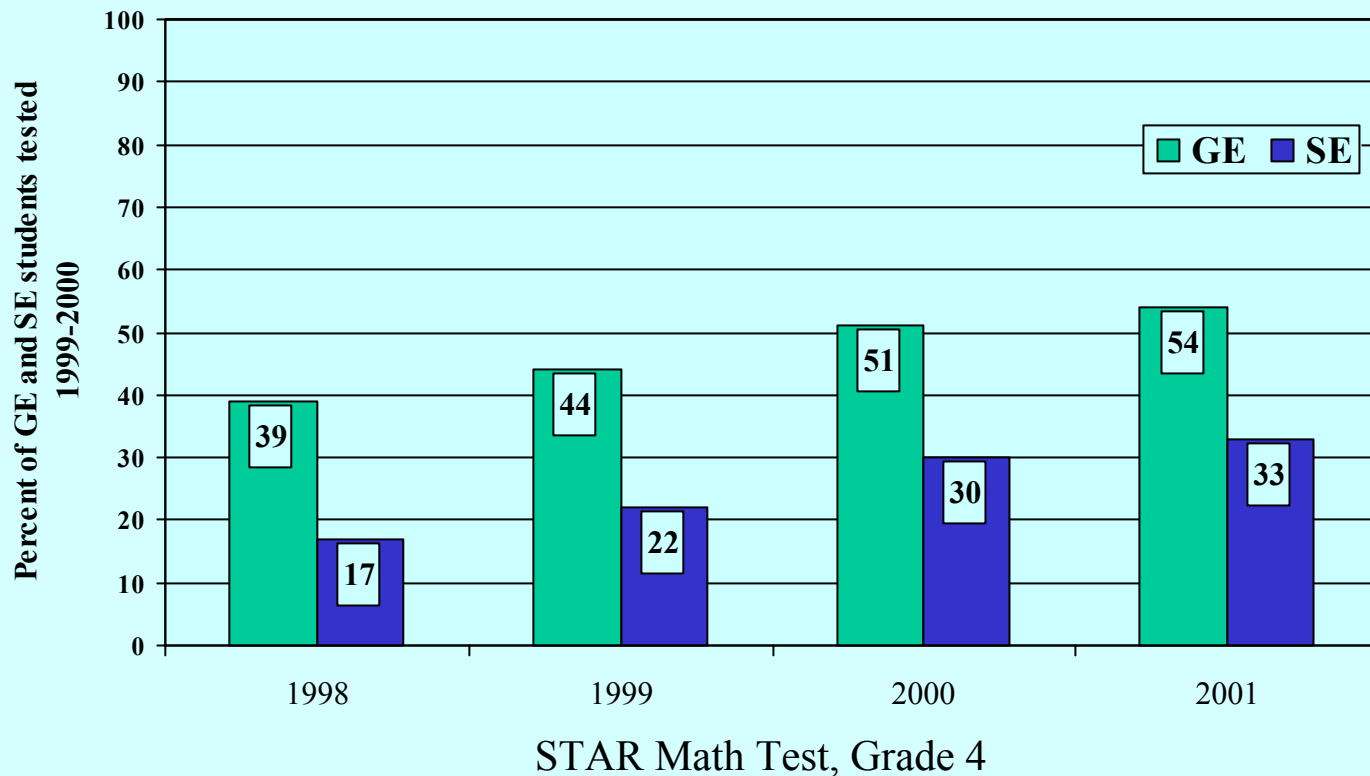
The number of overdue Annual IEP review and Three-Year Reevaluations has declined dramatically, dropping by 65% and 68% respectively.



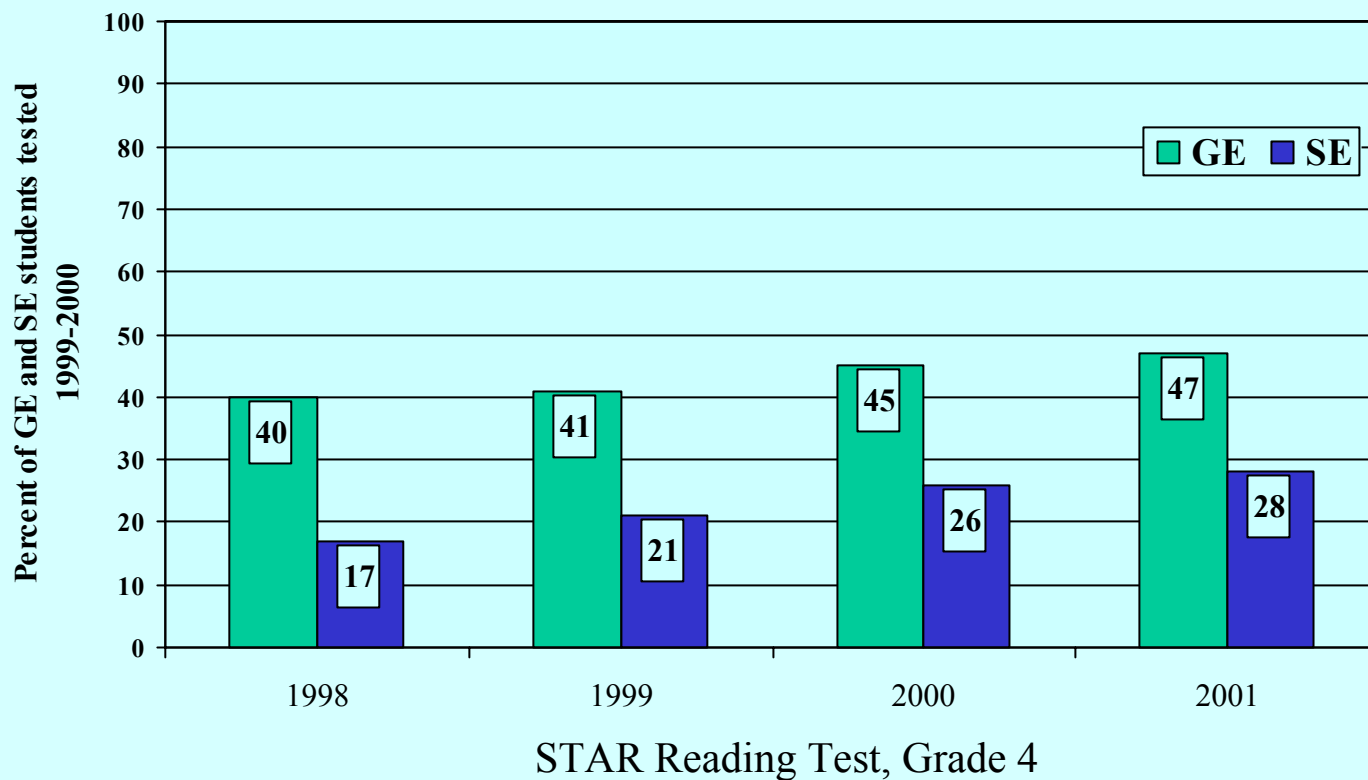
The percent of overdue Annual IEP review and Three-Year Reevaluations has declined dramatically, dropping by 8.4 and 4.6 percentage points respectively.



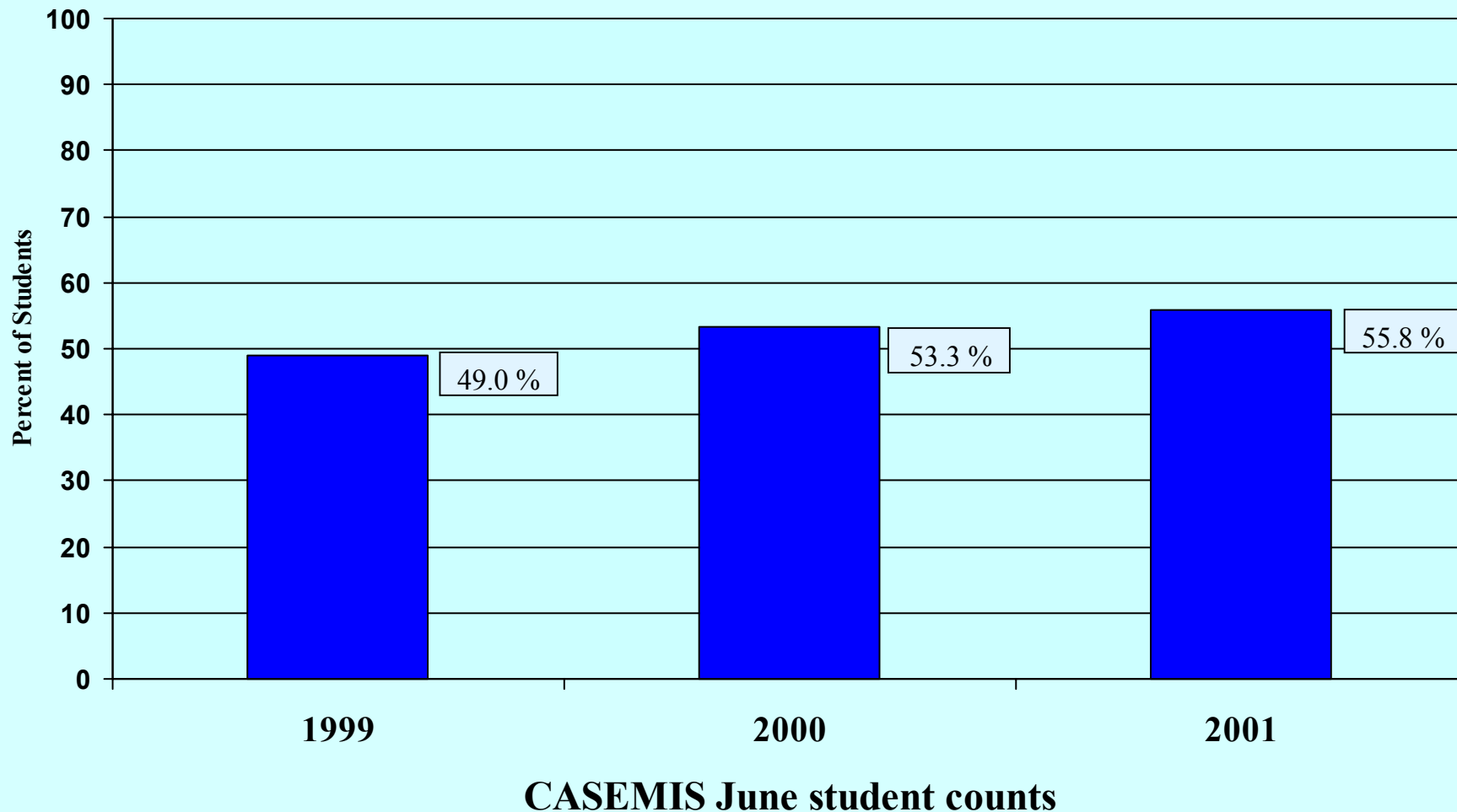
The percent of students scoring at or above the 50th percentile has increased steadily each year for both GE and SE students. The gap between the two groups has decreased only 1 point.



The percent of students scoring at or above the 50th percentile has increased steadily each year for both GE and SE students. The gap between the two groups has decreased by 4 points.



**The percent of students receiving Special Education
and educated with their non-disabled peers 80% or more of the time
has increased steadily**



In the last ten years, California's special education population has grown faster than the national average

Number of Students 3-21 Served Under Part B of IDEA				
State	1990-91	2000-01	Increased No.	Percent Increase
Florida	234,509	367,335	132,826	56.64
Texas	344,529	491,642	147,113	42.70
New York	307,366	438,465	131,099	42.65
California	468,420	645,287	176,857	37.76
US as a whole	4,745,218	6,361,857	1,616,639	34.07
Illinois	236,060	296,095	60,035	25.43
Ohio	205,440	237,643	32,203	15.68
Pennsylvania	214,254	239,778	25,524	11.91

California has reduced the number of students served in separate facilities and has increased the number of students who spend more time in regular classrooms.

Percentage of Students 6-21 Served in Different Educational Settings

Percentage of Students 6-21 Served in Different Educational Settings								
State	Percent of Time Outside Regular Class						Separate Facility	
	Less than 21%		21 thru 60%		More than 60%			
	89-90	99-00	89-90	99-00	89-90	99-00	89-90	99-00
Texas	5.18	28.24	68.19	52.04	22.60	17.95	4.03	1.77
Florida	30.89	49.79	35.44	26.25	27.81	21.99	5.85	1.97
California	25.54	49.44	42.88	20.19	26.49	26.84	5.09	3.53
Pennsylvania	35.02	35.78	28.90	32.81	30.48	27.71	5.59	3.70
US as a whole	31.46	47.32	37.54	28.32	24.92	20.29	6.08	4.07
Ohio	35.21	64.84	22.75	24.94	29.67	5.23	12.36	4.99
Illinois	26.16	37.34	34.42	28.03	31.24	28.41	8.17	6.22
New York	6.87	47.62	36.93	13.16	43.58	30.73	12.62	8.49

California has the largest special education caseloads of any of the large states in the country.

No. of Students with Disabilities per Teacher		
State	1994-95	1999-00
Illinois	13	13
Pennsylvania	15	14
Ohio	16	16
US as a whole	17	18
New York	13	20
Texas	19	21
Florida	21	22
California	25	26

Despite the huge class sizes and the elimination of differential standards, California has made dramatic increases in the percent of students with disabilities graduating with a diploma.

Percent Graduating with a Standard Diploma (All Disabilities)			
State	1993-94	1999-00	Increase
Texas	76.05	88.51	12.46
Pennsylvania	78.93	79.28	0.35
Ohio	75.34	68.22	-7.12
US as a whole	51.90	56.22	4.32
Illinois	59.30	55.52	-3.78
California	33.71	54.23	20.52
New York	41.99	41.06	-0.93
Florida	41.88	36.65	-5.23

And, California has reduced the drop out rate of students with disabilities by almost one third since 1993-94 – almost half of the rate of the U.S. as a whole.

Percent Age 14 and Older Dropping Out (All Disabilities)			
State	1993-94	1999-00	Decrease
Texas	23.95	10.79	13.16
California	47.33	15.03	32.30
Pennsylvania	16.96	18.63	-1.67
Ohio	19.53	22.88	-3.35
US as a whole	34.45	29.39	5.06
Florida	34.85	35.14	-0.29
New York	36.06	36.36	-0.30
Illinois	34.66	38.49	-3.83

OSEP's involvement in California has met with mixed reviews

- Positively received
 - Interaction with OSEP staff,
 - OSEP technical assistance materials and contractors
 - OSEP sponsored technical assistance events
- Overall concerns with monitoring efforts
 - Emphasis on procedural details
 - Key terms are difficult to clarify
 - Big issues are viewed as systemic problems in all districts
 - Let us complete one thing before we get involved in another

Overall Recommendations to the Commission

- Clarify the purposes of IDEA
 - Clarify that the overall purposes of IDEA are both protection of rights AND improving outcomes
 - Right now the statute is almost entirely focused on procedure
- Increase emphasis on educational issues and access to effective instruction
 - OSEP needs to increase their emphasis and knowledge on pedagogy and research based instructional practices.
 - OSEP needs to disengage the Office of General Council from the process so that educators can talk with other educators.

Recommendations, cont'd

- Decrease procedural prescription
 - Decrease procedural prescription and
 - increase a focus on ensuring that
 - (1) parents receive notice of substantive actions (IEP, placement, eligibility or refusal);
 - (2) parents know they have a right to participate in those decisions and to disagree with something substantive in the action; and
 - (3) parents know how and act to exercise their rights
- Reconceptualize data collection and analysis
 - In order to support increased emphasis on outcomes, data collection needs to
 - focus less on standardizing data from states for the purpose of cross-state comparisons and
 - focus more on making data useful to states in guiding and assessing the effectiveness of their own improvement efforts

Recommendations, cont'd

- Ensure that all children are included in the accountability system
 - Require that state general education data systems ensure that the entire population of students served in special education can be identified for purposes of accountability and governance.
 - Acknowledge that some children have different learning needs and different ways are needed to assess them
- Support OSEP to get on with their results oriented oversight processes and research informed technical assistance.
 - If "rights protection" is simplified and aimed more at showing a substantive loss rather than procedural violation, OSEP will have more opportunity to focus on outcomes.
 - The "outcomes" focus should be on ensuring that states use information on every child to guide and evaluate the effectiveness of their governance and improvement efforts

Recommendations, cont'd

- Support OSEP to model interagency collaboration
 - demonstrate the kind of collaboration that is expected of states and school districts
 - integrate and streamline submission of plans, fiscal information and reports
 - using a singular and integrated data base (e.g. same drop out data used by OSEP and OCR)
- Support OSEP to distribute funds in a more effective fashion.
 - All states need to receive State Implementation Grants
 - Need to be available for states to apply to those areas and those issues that will have the most effect.
 - CSPD funds need to be consolidated so states can direct resources in the most beneficial fashion.

Recommendations, cont'd

- Support states to have sufficient resource capacity to undertake the governance job expected
 - States lack, in many cases, the resource capacity to do the governance job expected
 - Congress has limited administration as a function
 - State legislatures can (and do) allocate resources to local level for politically expedient reasons
 - Assign a realistic level of money to the state for administration and then allow some discretion in how the systems are set up

